

## EUGENIC STERILIZATION IN NORTH CAROLINA

CLARENCE J. GAMBLE, M. D.

MILTON. MASSACHUSETTS

One method of preventive medicine, the sterilization of the insane, the feeble-minded, and the epileptic, is supervised by the Eugenics Board of North Carolina. The Board's biennial report for the period ending July 1, 1950, tells of its most recent accomplishments.

### Authorization Procedures

Petitions for the sterilization of a mentally diseased, feeble-minded, or epileptic person may be initiated by a county superintendent of welfare, or the head of a state institution. If the Board finds that the operation is for the best mental, moral or physical improvement of the patient, or for the public good, it may authorize the procedure.

The law establishing the Eugenics Board provides that no one participating in an au-

thorized sterilization shall be either civilly or criminally liable. This gives the surgeon protection which the consent to an operation signed by a person known to be insane, feeble-minded, or a minor, might not furnish.

### Analysis of Authorized Sterilizations Since 1929

In the twenty-one years since its establishment in 1929, a total of 2,538 operations have been performed after authorization by the Eugenics Board<sup>(1)</sup>. A great majority—2,030—have been performed on females. This is probably due to the fact that men are less willing to believe that the only effect of sterilization is the prevention of parenthood.

Sixty per cent, or 1,528, of the operations have been performed by county institutions.

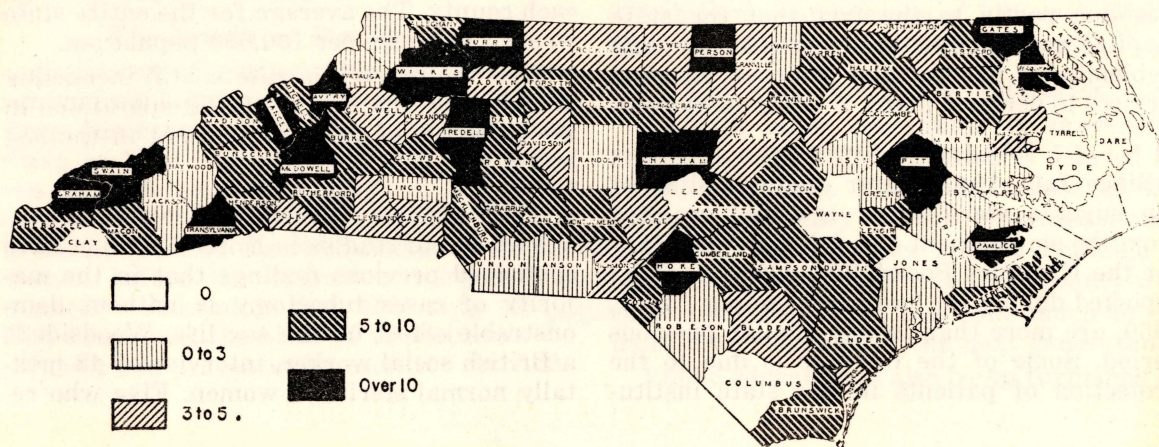


Fig. 1. Annual sterilization rate per 100,000 population, in North Carolina, July 1, 1948-June 30, 1950. (Source: Biennial Report of the Eugenics Board of North Carolina and U. S. Census, 1950.)